

Roundtable Talks Help Identify Steps Needed to Continue Growth of Ithaca-Area High-Tech Industry

Ithaca, NY - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today hosted a roundtable discussion with 26 Ithaca area high-tech small business owners and workers to discuss federal efforts designed to help spur growth and job creation in the emerging Tompkins County high-tech sector.

Hinchey outlined several federal tax credits designed to help small businesses create jobs and also discussed federal grants that have been secured for research at Cornell University and the development of high-tech products at area companies, including Widetronix and Primet. Hinchey also described the initiative being driven by The Solar Energy Consortium (TSEC) to create a solar energy cluster in the region, and discussed how its efforts might be expanded to continue creating jobs.

"Targeted federal investments in research and new technologies can drive the creation of spin-off companies that create jobs in the development of market-ready products," said Hinchey. "In the Ithaca area, the high-tech industry is growing in large part because of these investments and also because of the strong leadership of local entrepreneurs. More broadly, I'm working to deliver the additional support these small businesses need to grow, including a tax credit worth up to 35 percent of health care premiums, hiring incentives through the HIRE act and improved access to lines of credit through a Small Business Lending Fund that I voted to create last week."

Following a recent district-wide tour of small businesses, last week Hinchey joined the House in passing the Small Business Jobs and Credit Act - a bill designed to boost lending to small businesses struggling to gain access to credit due to the financial crisis. The bill would create the Small Business Lending Fund that leverages \$300 billion in loans for small businesses through a \$30 billion lending fund for small and medium-sized community banks. The legislation now awaits action in the Senate.

Hinchey also voted for health insurance reform, which offers immediate tax credits of up to 35 percent of insurance premiums for over 15,000 small businesses in the congressional district he represents. The tax credits will increase to a maximum of 50 percent by 2014.

The Hiring Incentives to Restore Employment (HIRE) Act was also passed with Hinchey's strong support. It exempts employers from paying the employer share of Social Security employment taxes for wages paid in 2010 for any new employee that was previously unemployed and does not replace another employee. The bill also provides a \$1,000 income tax credit for every new employee that is employed for 52 weeks and extends the Recovery Act provision that allows small businesses to write-off capital expenditures of up to \$250,000.

Hinchey recently visited Widetronix at the South Hill Business Campus in Ithaca to announce two federal grants worth a total of \$2.2 million he helped secure for the company. Widetronix is using the funds to expand its team and open a prototyping facility, creating five jobs in the near term and 25 high-tech jobs over the next several years. Representatives from Widetronix were in attendance for today's roundtable discussion.

"Congressman Hinchey has time and again showed his commitment to helping local small businesses create jobs," said Jon Greene of Widetronix. "He was instrumental in helping us secure substantial federal grants to help our company expand operations and create jobs. He's also been working hard to create some pretty substantial tax relief provisions that are already helping other area businesses."

The initial \$1.2 million grant was secured through TSEC -- an industry-driven, non-profit organization that provides leadership, organization, resources, and support for the establishment of a major solar energy industry cluster in New York. Hinchey helped establish TSEC in 2007 and has secured more than \$31 million in federal funding for the consortium and its partners across New York.

Hinchey has also secured \$8 million in federal investments for Primet Inc., an Ithaca based advanced battery technology company that is currently adding positions as a result of the federal grants.

The grants for Widetronix and Primet, along with a \$17.5 million Department of Energy grant for

Cornell's Energy Materials Center, are helping make Ithaca a hub for the development of high-tech battery technology that will help drive and expand the use of solar energy and other technologies.

The companies that participated in today's roundtable discussion include: Widetronix, e2e Materials, Orthogonal, Centurion, Adenios, Aerofarms, Instinctiv, Zetroz, Microgen, Sanmita, Sound Reading, Vybion, Student Agencies, BinOptics, Seamless Receipts, Rheonix, Fortis Wind Energy USA, Gorges Websites, Tech2S, Upstate Venture Connect, International Food Network, Singlebrook Technology, GrowFit and Primet Precision Materials. Brad Treat, Founder and CEO of Mezmeriz, Inc., organized the roundtable event.